



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 1/1/2013 to 12/31/2013.**

### **HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**

Pursuant to Section 2-1-147(B) of the Code of the City of Austin, the Historic Landmark Commission:

1. Shall prepare and periodically revise an inventory of the structures and areas that may be eligible for designation as historic landmarks.
2. Shall prepare, review, and propose amendments to the Historic Landmark Preservation Plan.
3. Shall review requests to establish or remove a historic designation and make recommendations on the requests to the Land Use Commission, as determined in accordance with Section 25-1-46 of the Code of the City of Austin.
4. Shall provide information and counseling to owners of structures that are designated as historic structures.
5. May initiate zoning or rezoning of property to establish or remove a historic designation.
6. May recommend amendments to the Code of the City of Austin relating to historic preservation.
7. May recommend that the City acquire property if the Commission finds that acquisition by the City is the only means by which to preserve the property.
8. May advise the Council on matters relating to historic preservation.
9. For an object that is not permanently affixed to land, may recommend that Council confer special historic designation, and
10. Shall perform other duties as prescribed by the Code of the City of Austin or other ordinance.

**I. Describe the Commission's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the Commission's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

1. The Commission currently uses several surveys prepared for the City in evaluating the historical significance of buildings and structures subject to Commission review, such as applications for demolition permits, relocation permits, National Register Historic District building permits, National Register Historic District sign permits, Certificates of Appropriateness for designated city historic landmarks and for properties within locally-designated historic districts, and applications for historic zoning of both individual buildings and locally-designated historic districts. These surveys include the East Austin Survey (1980), the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984), the Clarksville Survey, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Street East Austin Survey, the Chestnut Neighborhood Survey, and others. Other sources of information for the Commission include lists of contributing (and non-contributing) properties within the City's 15 National Register Historic Districts and 3 locally-designated historic districts.

Over the past calendar year, the Commission has continued to work with the University of Texas, which has received a City grant to prepare a "wiki" platform for existing City surveys, and to incorporate new surveys as they are completed. The wiki approach to survey work is to allow a platform for the general public to add information about particular buildings, structures, districts, or neighborhoods that will result in a much fuller understanding of historic context, and provide information that traditional documentary surveys may not include, such as historic photographs and personal knowledge of historic occupants.

This is an on-going project, and the Commission has had several presentations by University of Texas personnel on the progress of the project, as well as opportunities to provide feedback to the project staff.

2. The City's Preservation Plan dates from 1981, and has been expanded by the City's new Comprehensive Plan – "Imagine Austin." The Commission created a Preservation Plan Committee, which provided input and suggestions to both the staff of Imagine Austin and the Downtown Austin Plan regarding historic preservation issues.

3. Each month, the Commission reviews applications for historic zoning as part of its regular business at public meetings. In 2013, the Commission reviewed 9 historic zoning cases, including 1 for a locally-designated historic district. Of those 9 historic zoning cases, all but 1 was brought by the owners of the property, and the 1 Commission-initiated case was in response to an application to demolish a potentially historic structure. The case for the historic district was withdrawn. The Commission recommended historic zoning on the 8 applications brought by the property owners, including that for the Seaholm Power Plant, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, the Eloy and Soledad Guajardo House, and Ethel Pearl's Beauty Salon.



The St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, 2209 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, was originally built as a tabernacle; this 1940 building was first home to the David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. When David Chapel moved to new quarters in 1959, this building became the sanctuary for St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, another long-standing African American congregation in Austin. The Commission recommended historic zoning for this church; the nomination was approved by the City Council as part of Black History Month.

4. The Commission has established the Certificates of Appropriateness Review Committee, a committee made up of 3 Commission members, representing a wide range of knowledge in terms of architecture and architectural history. The Committee meets monthly (two weeks prior to the full Commission meeting), and provides a preliminary review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for designated historic landmarks and for properties within locally-designated historic districts. The Committee reviews an average of 6 applications each month in an informal setting where the applicant presents the proposal to the Committee members, who then work closely with the applicant to ensure a successful proposal at the full Commission. The Committee has been extremely helpful and effective in guiding applicants towards approval of their applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation as well as the design standards established for locally-designated historic districts.

5. As part of its regular monthly public meetings, the Commission reviews application for the demolition or relocation of potentially historic properties, and may initiate a historic zoning case to gather more information about the history of a property before deciding to recommend the case for historic

zoning to the Planning Commission and the City Council. In 2013, the Commission initiated a historic zoning case on 1 application for demolition of a potentially historic structure.

6. The Commission works closely with City staff to identify and process amendments to City Code sections dealing with historic preservation issues.

7. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend that the City acquire property to preserve a property in 2013.

8. The Commission recommended historic zoning for 8 properties in 2013.

9. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend historic zoning for an object not specifically affixed to land in 2013.

10. The Commission did not have occasion to perform other duties as prescribed by Code or ordinance, other than the activities described above.

**II. Determine if the Commission's actions through the year comply with the mission statement.**

Every action of the Historic Landmark Commission has complied with the mission statement and applicable City Code sections relating to the Commission and historic preservation in 2013.

**III. List the Commission's goals and objective for the new calendar year.**

In addition to continuing the regular work described above, the Commission intends to evaluate the city's historic district sign ordinance, continue working with the University of Texas to develop the "wiki" platform for historic structure surveys, and improve the effectiveness of historic preservation efforts in Austin, especially the creation of locally-designated historic districts.